

DANCE AS A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING CULTURAL PRODUCTS: LITERATURE REVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BATIK MSMEs IN INDONESIA

Dwiyasmono¹, Nur Rokhim², Taufik Murtono^{3*}

^{1,2} Dance Department, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta. Jl. Ki Hadjar Dewantara 19, Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta 57126, Central Java, Indonesia

³ Design Department, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta. Jl. Ki Hadjar Dewantara 19, Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta 57126, Central Java, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Taufik Murtono³

Abstract

Batik MSMEs in Indonesia face significant challenges in promoting products based on cultural identity, especially in the era of globalization and digitalization, which encourages the homogenization of marketing strategies. One innovative alternative that has the potential to overcome this challenge is the use of dance as a symbol-based visual communication medium. This study aims to analyze the potential of dance in strengthening the promotion strategy of cultural products, especially batik, through a literature review approach to reputable scientific sources. The study result shows that dance, through movements, costumes, and visual expressions, can build a symbolic narrative that strengthens the cultural identity of batik products. The integration of visual elements from dance into promotional strategies can increase the emotional connection between products and consumers, create added value, and strengthen product images based on local wisdom in a competitive market. These findings contribute to a new conceptual framework for developing batik MSME promotion strategies by positioning performing arts as a relevant medium for building brand identity and strengthening the competitiveness of cultural products.

Keywords: *Dance, Visual Communication, Symbolic Narrative, Batik MSMEs, Cultural Identity, Promotion Strategies.*

Abstrak

UMKM batik di Indonesia menghadapi tantangan besar dalam mempromosikan produk berbasis identitas budaya, khususnya dalam era globalisasi dan digitalisasi yang mendorong homogenisasi strategi pemasaran. Salah satu alternatif inovatif yang berpotensi mengatasi tantangan ini adalah pemanfaatan seni tari sebagai media komunikasi visual berbasis simbolik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis potensi seni tari dalam memperkuat strategi promosi produk budaya, khususnya batik, melalui pendekatan literatur review terhadap sumber-sumber ilmiah bereputasi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa seni tari, melalui gerakan, kostum, dan ekspresi visual, mampu membangun narasi simbolik yang memperkuat identitas budaya produk batik. Integrasi unsur-unsur visual tari dalam strategi promosi dapat meningkatkan keterhubungan emosional antara produk dan konsumen, menciptakan nilai tambah, serta memperkuat citra produk berbasis kearifan lokal di tengah pasar yang kompetitif. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi berupa kerangka konseptual baru bagi pengembangan strategi promosi UMKM batik, dengan menempatkan seni pertunjukan sebagai media yang relevan untuk membangun identitas merek dan memperkuat daya saing produk budaya.

Kata kunci: Seni Tari, Komunikasi Visual, Narasi Simbolik, UMKM Batik, Identitas Budaya, Strategi Promosi.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research is motivated by several thoughts about the cultural identity crisis in promoting local products. In this crisis, batik MSMEs face challenges in navigating the digital market. On the other hand, the potential of dance as a symbolic form of visual communication needs to be explored in efforts to empower MSMEs in Indonesia. Cultural identity crises in promoting local products occur when local values, symbols, and identities are threatened or distorted by the influence of globalization and marketing strategies insensitive to culture. Promoting local products that overlook cultural identity can weaken the attachment of local consumers and reduce the competitiveness of these products in the market. Interaction of Local and Global Identities: Consumers now possess multiple identities, both local and global, that influence their attitudes and purchasing intentions for local products. A strong local identity increases the tendency to buy local products, whereas a dominant global identity can lead to xenocentrism (a preference for foreign products) and decrease interest in local products (Miocevic et al., 2021; Strizhakova & Coulter, 2019; Zhang et al., 2021). There are several consumer segments: those with strong local identities, those with strong global identities, those with strong local and global identities (glocal), and those who are disengaged. This segmentation is essential for an effective promotional strategy (Strizhakova & Coulter, 2019).

Globalization and standardization of products can erode local products' uniqueness and symbolic meaning, making regional cultural identities blurred or marginalized (Clifton, 2011; Strizhakova & Coulter, 2019). Exploitation and Nostalgia: Promotional campaigns sometimes exploit social divisions or use nostalgia, but often ignore the true diversity of local identities (Gee & Jackson, 2012). A cultural identity crisis arises when marketing strategies fail to accommodate or even erode the values and symbols of local culture, promoting local products. Understanding and integrating local cultural identities in promotion is essential to building consumer loyalty, strengthening the position of local products, and preventing identity crises amid globalization trends.

Batik MSMEs in Indonesia face considerable challenges when entering the digital market. Although digitalization offers vast market opportunities and operational efficiency, many batik MSMEs are still constrained by limited resources, digital literacy, and increasingly fierce competition. The main challenge for batik MSMEs in facing the digital market is the limitations of digital literacy, human resources, funding, and adaptation to changes in consumer behavior. Many batik MSME actors still lack understanding of using social media, marketplaces, and digital technology for marketing (Anatan et al., 2021; Cahya et al., 2020; Munifah et al., 2024). Other challenges include limited numbers and competencies of employees in managing digital marketing and online operations (Abenzoza, Arjona, Absattarov, Absattarov, k. Chow, et al., 2021; Amalia et al., 2023; Mansur et al., 2023a), limited funds for technology investment, training, and digital content development (Anatan et al., 2021), competition with digital batik products and changes in consumer behavior that prefer online shopping (Fahira et al., 2025), as well as problems of delivery, payment, and management of digital content

that are not optimal, are still obstacles for batik MSME actors in Indonesia (Mansur et al., 2023b).

Various strategies and solutions have been developed to help batik MSMEs in Indonesia. Digital literacy training, marketing content creation, and digital platform optimization have been shown to increase understanding and sales (Farikhah et al., 2024a; Munifah et al., 2024; Nuvriasari et al., 2024a). There has also been the development of attractive promotional content on social media and marketplaces to strengthen branding and interaction with consumers (Inayah et al., 2024) through collaboration with digital designers, influencers, and the utilization of various promotional channels to expand market reach. In the investment and human resource development sector, interventions have been carried out to improve employee skills and develop an integrated digital marketing system (Mansur et al., 2023b).

MSME actors feel the impact of digitalization because it affects the expansion of market access and increased sales (Farikhah et al., 2024b; Jamil & Adinugraha, 2024). Other impacts include operational and marketing efficiency (Farikhah et al., 2024a), improved branding, and customer satisfaction (Munifah et al., 2024). With the demands and challenges of adapting marketing technology and competition (Nuvriasari et al., 2024b), batik MSMEs must overcome the challenges of digital literacy, human resources, and funding to compete in the digital market. Training, content development, collaboration, and investment in human resources are the keys to enabling batik MSMEs to survive and thrive in the digital era.

On the other hand, dance is a powerful form of symbolic visual communication, using body movements and expressions to convey emotions, narratives, and social meanings without words. The potential of dance lies in its ability to convey complex messages, foster connection, and create common understanding through the visual symbols and meanings it contains. Dance communicates emotions, thoughts, and attitudes through body language, gestures, and posture, allowing access to the dancer's inner world and overcoming barriers to verbal communication (Stutesman & Goldstein, 2023).

In dance, movement becomes a shared vocabulary that visualizes collective cultural memories and archetypes to create meaning and identity through performative interactions (Törnqvist & Holmberg, 2021). The purpose behind the choreographed movement and narrative content is key to how the viewer perceives and interprets the emotions and stories in the dance, making the creator's expressive purpose the center of communication (Patel-Grosz et al., 2022a; Stutesman & Goldstein, 2023). Dance is visually appreciated and captured by other senses through the presence of the body, which plays a role in constructing the meaning that the dancer shares with the audience (Calissendorff & Jaresand, 2023). In performances, the audience is an active participant who constructs meaning by interpreting symbolic gestures and actions based on their own cultural experiences and contexts (Ollora-Triana et al., 2023; Reason, 2010). The presence of dance notation and visual illustrations helps to symbolically communicate

dance movements, making them accessible even to those unfamiliar with a particular dance language (Wilmer et al., 2017). Dance fosters empathy, body awareness, and social reciprocity, supports communication and psychological well-being, especially in therapeutic contexts (DeJesus et al., 2020). Dance can also serve as a medium to preserve and transmit stories, values, and cultural identities through symbolic gestures (Patel-Grosz et al., 2022a)

This study views dance as a rich and multisensory form of symbolic visual communication, capable of expressing complex emotions, narratives, and social meanings. The power of dance lies in the creation and co-interpretation of embodied symbols, making it a unique and impactful medium for human connection and understanding. Dance has strong potential as a symbolic form of visual communication because it can convey values, identities, and cultural narratives through movement, costumes, and expressive elements. Dance creates an aesthetic experience that resonates with the audience's emotions, making it an effective medium for conveying product promotion messages rooted in local wisdom.

The problem addressed in this study is the role of dance as a visual communication medium in promoting cultural products, particularly batik, and the contribution of dance to establishing a brand identity rooted in local wisdom. Based on this formulation, this study aims to conduct a systematic review of the literature that discusses the role of dance in the promotion of cultural products and develop a conceptual framework that connects dance, marketing communication, cultural identity, and the promotion of batik MSMEs. Theoretically, this study aims to expand the cross-disciplinary study between the performing arts, communication, and marketing, while providing a practical strategic reference for batik MSMEs in developing cultural narrative-based promotions.

2. METHOD

The research uses a literature review procedure (Paré & Kitsiou, 2017; Templier & Paré, 2015) with stages 1) formulating questions and protocols for inclusion and exclusion of writing data, 2) searching for qualified writings from the Google Scholar and Scopus databases, 3) selecting writing data by extracting data and identifying duplicate data, 4) analyzing data based on the quantity and quality of writing according to theme groups, 5) presenting data in an analysis matrix, 6) interpret the results of the analysis and draw conclusions. Although this procedure is written sequentially, its implementation can be iterative/repetitive. Improvement of each stage can be done throughout the research process. The selection of the Google Scholar database was to obtain the views of researchers in Indonesia regarding the practice of dance representation in advertising. Meanwhile, the Scopus database is intended to provide various recommendations from researchers from multiple countries on this theme.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Batik MSMEs and their cultural identity issues

MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in the batik sector are essential in preserving and promoting Indonesia's cultural identity. However, these companies face challenges with cultural heritage, identity, modernization, and market access. The following overview synthesizes research on the intersection of batik MSMEs and cultural identity issues. Batik has evolved from a vernacular tradition to a symbol of urban and national identity, reflecting Indonesia's diverse cultural heritage and its journey towards modernity and unity (Woelandhary et al., 2024). The development of batik motifs that combine elements from various regions fosters multiculturalism and national pride, particularly among young people (Candra & Saptatiningsih, 2023). Batik is internationally recognized as a cultural heritage, and its patterns carry a deep philosophical meaning related to local history and values (Rohisa, 2022).

Batik businesses empower local communities by creating jobs and supporting the local economy through the production of various batik products (scarves, bags, sandals, masks, and hijabs) (Anggrayani & Zainal, 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2024). Community-based batik initiatives foster pride and a sense of ownership of cultural heritage, helping preserve local identity amid globalization (Anggrayani & Zainal, 2021; Rohisa, 2022). Regional batik subcultures, such as those in Pekalongan, are shaped by cross-cultural influences. It can be arenas for political and economic contestation, highlighting the complex relationship between culture, identity, and power (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Many batik MSMEs struggle with traditional marketing methods and limited brand awareness, limiting their reach and sales (Fauzi et al., 2025; Indriana & Nisa', 2024; Juita et al., 2023). Digital marketing and branding initiatives, including Instagram, Facebook, and websites, effectively increase product visibility, sales, and public recognition of local batik identities (Fauzi et al., 2025). Digital rebranding and training help MSME batik products be recognized as icons and regional souvenirs, supporting cultural preservation and economic growth (Indriana & Nisa', 2024). The dispute over batik's cultural heritage, particularly between Indonesia and Malaysia, underscores the importance of collaborative efforts among academics, artists, and educators in reconciling identity issues and promoting mutual understanding (Wahida & Himawan, 2022). Such collaborations can help overcome tensions and foster a shared appreciation of batik as a transnational cultural asset. Batik MSMEs are crucial to maintaining Indonesia's cultural identity, as they blend tradition with innovation and empower local communities. Although they face challenges in branding, marketing, and cultural heritage disputes, the strategic use of digital tools and collaborative efforts can enhance their role as custodians of Indonesia's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

3.2. Visibility challenges in global markets

Batik MSMEs face significant challenges in achieving visibility in the global market. Key barriers include limited digital marketing skills, reliance on traditional sales methods, lack of brand awareness, and difficulty adapting to changing consumer preferences. Improving digital marketing, branding, and market orientation is key to increasing global visibility for MSME batik. Many batik MSMEs still rely on conventional marketing, limiting their reach outside of the local community and making it challenging to access

broader or international markets (Agustino et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2025; Wilamsari, 2024). Low brand awareness: Lack of effective branding and use of digital media results in low public recognition, both at home and abroad (Indriana & Nisa', 2024). Many MSMEs lack the skills and knowledge to effectively utilize digital marketing tools and social media platforms (Abenzoza, Arjona, Absattarov, Absattarov, Yong, et al., 2021; Wilamsari, 2024). Batik MSMEs often struggle to keep up with shifting consumer tastes and the rise of batik printing competitors, especially in Java (Prasetyo et al., 2021; A. Raya et al., 2021)

There have been many marketing trainings that provide training and mentoring in using social media (Instagram, TikTok) and e-commerce platforms to help MSMEs expand their market reach and increase sales (Agustino et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2025; Indriana & Nisa', 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2021; Wilamsari, 2024). Branding and rebranding: Increasing product branding and rebranding efforts can increase brand awareness and make batik products more well-known globally (Agustino et al., 2024; Indriana & Nisa', 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2021). Understanding and responding to consumer needs and preferences is essential for competitive advantage and improved business performance (Andre & Raharjo, 2020; Hamid et al., 2023). Engaging with stakeholders and adopting open innovation practices can help MSMEs address resource and knowledge gaps (A. Raya et al., 2021). MSMEs must strive for digital marketing, strengthen branding, and stay in tune with market trends to address the challenges of visibility in global markets (Agustino et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2025; Prasetyo et al., 2021; Wilamsari, 2024). Training, innovation, and collaboration are essential to ensure their products gain wider recognition and international competitiveness (Agustino et al., 2024; Indriana & Nisa', 2024).

3.3. Dance as a visual communication medium

Dance is an essential form of cultural expression and can be a visual rhetorical tool. Through gestures and dance, aesthetic beauty is conveyed and messages, values, and social identities are communicated that reflect society and its times. Dance serves as a reflection of people's values, beliefs, and aspirations, as well as shaping identity and strengthening social cohesion (Desmond, 2012; Diniz, 2023; Ramesh, 2023). Dance can serve as a medium for addressing contemporary issues, raising social concerns, and providing a space for public discussion (Kimani, 2022; Ramesh, 2023). Historically, dance has been a syncretic language that expresses history, societal forms, and cultural changes (Diniz, 2023).

Dance uses dramatic techniques, symbols, and visual narratives to convey messages and construct meaning (Kimani, 2022; Patel-Grosz et al., 2022b) In some cultures, dance acts as a medium of social criticism and a tool for advocacy for social change (Desmond, 2012; Diniz, 2023; Kimani, 2022; Ramesh, 2023). Dance can also function as sign language, using space and motion to tell stories and track individuals in visual narratives (Patel-Grosz et al., 2022b). Dance has a confluence with other arts and is often part of a dialogue between arts, enriching meaning and expression (Desmond, 2012; Diniz, 2023)

Traditional and contemporary dance practices remain tied to their communities, preserving cultural heritage values and the principle of ownership (Whatley, 2022). Dance is a dynamic and multifunctional cultural expression, acting as an effective visual communication tool to convey messages, build identity, and strengthen social solidarity. Apart from being an art, dance is also a medium for reflection, advocacy, and health promotion, whose meaning is greatly influenced by the cultural and social context of the community.

3.4. The role of dance in tourism promotion strategies and cultural products

Traditional and modern dance play a crucial role in strengthening cultural identity and enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations. Folk dance groups have proven to be effective in developing cultural tourism. One of the surveys found that 100% of respondents agreed that folk dance can encourage cultural tourism and promote tourist destinations (Bohórquez et al., 2020). In Bali, dance undergoes innovation and transformation from a religious orientation to an economic one, enriching the tourist experience and showcasing the identity of the Balinese people as a culturally rich society (Abdillah et al., 2022).

Modern dance commodification strategies, such as in Kupang, include collaboration with various parties, the organization of online competitions, culture-based innovations, and the organization of independent events by the dance community. This approach is adequate for developing cultural tourism and expanding promotion reach (V. Raya et al., 2020) (Raya et al., 2020). On the other hand, the development of dance tourism in Hainan and Xi'an, China, emphasizes the importance of innovation, technological integration, and strengthening of industrial values to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of cultural tourism (Peng, 2024). Dance performances not only attract tourists but also encourage the consumption of cultural products. Studies of Korean dance performances indicate that watching dance performances can increase interest in purchasing Korean cultural products and intentions to visit Korea, suggesting a close relationship between cultural promotion through dance and tourist behaviour (Kwak et al., 2019).

Dance promotion plans, such as the Huarmi Tucushcas dance in Poaló, emphasize the use of digital media (websites, social media) and traditional media (leaflets, printed materials) to expand the reach of promotion, increase visibility, and reinforce the value and symbolism of dance as a superior cultural product (Vásconez & Rocío, 2019). Dance as part of creative tourism and experiential creative tourism offers opportunities for tourists to be actively involved as spectators, participants, and professionals. The promotion enriches the tourist experience and strengthens the connection between tourists and local culture (Badia & Schiattarella, 2024). Traditional and modern dance is an effective strategy in promoting tourism and cultural products. Innovation, collaboration, and the use of digital media are key to expanding the impact of promotion, strengthening cultural identity, and increasing tourists' interest in cultural destinations and products.

3.5. Conceptual framework

Based on the literature review conducted, the conceptual framework of this research maps the role of dance as a strategic visual communication medium in promoting cultural products, particularly batik. This framework explains that dance, as a visual representation of cultural expression, has the power to build and reinforce cultural identity. Cultural identities are displayed through dance performances, presenting potent visual symbols, including movements, clothing, and artistic arrangements that convey local cultural values and philosophies. This visual symbol is then incorporated into the product narrative, which strengthens the consumer's emotional attachment to batik products, thereby encouraging an understanding and appreciation of the cultural meaning represented by the product.

Based on symbolic wealth, this product narrative serves as the foundation for a more meaningful and differentiated promotional strategy, as it not only highlights the product's function or aesthetics but also conveys its cultural significance. Thus, a promotion strategy based on dance performance can strengthen the image of batik products in the eyes of local and global consumers. Finally, integrating dance in this promotion strategy can potentially increase the competitiveness of batik MSMEs because it provides added value by strengthening cultural identity relevant to market needs that increasingly appreciate originality, local wisdom, and the uniqueness of product narratives. This conceptual framework can be visually depicted in the line of thought in Figure 2.



Fig 2. Conceptual framework of research results.

4. CONCLUSION

This literature review demonstrates that dance has excellent potential as an effective visual communication medium for strengthening the promotion strategy of cultural products, particularly batik. Through the power of symbolic narratives contained in movements, costumes, and visual expressions, dance can convey the message of cultural identity more profoundly and emotionally to the audience. Dance strengthens the representation of local cultural identity and builds a stronger connection between batik products and consumers in regional and global contexts. The narrative constructed from the visual symbols of dance adds value to batik products, creating an authentic, unique, and rooted image of cultural wisdom. Thus, integrating dance into promotional strategies positively contributes to efforts to strengthen the competitiveness of batik MSMEs amid increasingly competitive market challenges.

This research opens up opportunities for developing interdisciplinary studies that connect the fields of performing arts, communication, and marketing. These findings

provide a basis for developing a theory of culture-based visual communication, particularly in relation to how performance media, such as dance, can be strategically integrated into the marketing practices of cultural products. In addition, this study enriches the discourse on the relationship between art, cultural identity, and the creative economy, which is relevant to current creative industry dynamics.

The results of this study offer strategic insights for batik MSME actors to adopt promotional innovations grounded in local wisdom through a performance arts approach. Integrating dance into marketing strategies can be an effective way to increase visibility, strengthen brand image, and foster stronger emotional relationships with consumers. Additionally, this approach can help MSMEs create a more authentic product narrative, add value, and enhance competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

These findings also offer strategic recommendations for the government and stakeholders in designing policies to promote cultural products rooted in local performing arts. Policies that encourage collaboration between MSMEs, the arts community, and the tourism sector can help strengthen a sustainable creative economy ecosystem. In addition, support for initiatives integrating dance in promoting local products can help enhance national cultural identity and increase the creative sector's contribution to the economy. This research has limitations because it is entirely based on literature reviews, so it has not empirically tested the effectiveness of dance integration in cultural product marketing strategies. Therefore, advanced research is needed to test the conceptual model formulated through case study approaches, experiments, and action research that directly involve batik MSMEs and the art community. Future research may also expand coverage to include different types of cultural products, examine the specific impact of dance use on consumer perceptions, and investigate the role of digital media in promoting dance performances as part of local product marketing strategies.

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